



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., *State Superintendent*

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September 9, 2016

TO: Directors, Exceptional Children Programs
Lead Administrators, Charter Schools

FROM: William J. Hussey, Director *WJH*
Exceptional Children Division

RE: Deaf-Blind Intervener Training Opportunities (Open Hands Open Access)

“Deaf-blindness creates very unique and complex challenges caused by the concomitant effect of both vision and hearing loss. These challenges are mainly in the area of communication, concept development, social and emotional development. An intervener responds to these challenges by serving as a link between the learner and his or her world, and by helping to expand it” (Alsop, et. Al., 2007).

Open Hands Open Access (OHOA) was created by individuals working with children who are deaf-blind for the purpose of providing training for interveners. Intervenors are paraprofessionals who are specially trained to work one to one with children who are deaf-blind. The primary responsibility is to be certain that the child has access to all information and activities that occur during the school day.

The Deaf-Blind Project would like to inform LEAs of two (2) exciting possibilities for educators:

The ECU Teacher Support Project (TSP) is recruiting individuals working directly with learners with deaf-blindness in *intervener* or *instructional assistant* positions to join the new Intervener Professional Learning Community (“Intervener PLC”)! Meetings will be held on a regular basis (both face-to-face and virtual). During these facilitated sessions, PLC members will complete select Open Hands, Open Access (OHOA) Deaf-Blind Intervener online training modules (<http://moodle.nationaldb.org/>) and refine their work supporting learners with deaf-blindness. The ECU TSP will provide facilitator/mentor support to PLC members studying the OHOA modules and pursuing national certification. In addition, the ECU TSP will provide a \$100 stipend for each completed OHOA module, technology as needed (e.g., iPad), as well as travel support needed by PLC members to participate in PLC activities. The Deaf-Blind Project hopes to start the PLC in early to mid-October and continue the work throughout the school year.

Concurrent with the OHOA module professional development activities, PLC members are also invited to participate in the National Intervener Certification ePortfolio (NICE) process leading toward submission of a portfolio for review for national Intervener certification by the ParaCenter at the University of Colorado-Denver. PLC members making sufficient progress toward national certification will submit an ePortfolio following the 2016-2017 school year (and into the 2017-2018 school year).

Interested individuals who are interested in the ECU TSP should contact Dr. Sandra Warren by Friday, September 21, 2016 at warrens@ecu.edu or 252-328-2699. (NOTE: If interested participants are not currently an intervener, instructional assistant, or similar school/program staff member and are interested in training, please continue reading for an exciting opportunity to join others interested in studying several of the OHOA modules.)

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN DIVISION

William J. Hussey, *Director* | bill.hussey@dpi.nc.gov

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

FREE Training: The NC Deaf-Blind Project in collaboration with the SouthEastern Transition Team is sponsoring for family members, service providers, interpreters, teachers, and individuals interested in learning about deaf-blindness. The trainings, listed below, are identified modules from Open Hands Open Access (OHOA) which are designed to offer informational practices specific in working with children who are deaf-blind. The modules will be overseen by a trained facilitator who will provide support in completing module activities.

Below is additional information about the OHOA training opportunities.

September 26, 2016-February 3, 2017: Open Hands Open Access Intervener modules in working with children who are deaf-blind –(Module 11 -Instructional Strategies, Module 10 -Concept Development, and Module 13- Calendars/Schedules) will begin September 26th and conclude February 3, 2017. For information contact Dottie Snyder at 919.807.3987 by September 16, 2016 for registration information or register on-line at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OHOA16option1> by September 19th

October 3, 2016-December 9, 2016: Open Hands Open Access Intervener modules in working with children who are deaf-blind –(Module 1- DB Overview, Module 2 – Sensory system and learning, and Module 3- Role of interveners in educational settings) will begin October 3rd and conclude December 9th, 2016. For information contact Dottie Snyder at 919.807.3987 by September 26, 2016 for registration information or register on-line at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OHOA16option1> by September 26th.

Individuals who are interested in the free trainings should contact Dottie Snyder at Dorothy.snyder@dpi.nc.us or 919-807-3987.

WJH/DM/ds

CC: Dr. Sandra Warren
Andrea Blackwood